

ARTICLE APPEARED IN NEW YORK TIMES
ON PAGE A-3 9 July 1985

Reagan Affirms Support for Thailand

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Special to The New York Times

BANGKOK, Thailand, July 8 — Thai and American officials said today that President Reagan, in a letter delivered here by Secretary of State George P. Shultz, had affirmed United States support for Thailand in the face of what is viewed as a threat posed by Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia.

The officials said that Mr. Shultz, who arrived from Hong Kong for a two-day stay, had given the letter to Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda of Thailand.

Mr. Shultz also met with officials of the two non-Communist members of a Cambodian rebel coalition that is fighting against the Vietnamese-backed Cambodian Government.

Before receiving the rebel leaders, Mr. Shultz condemned what he called "the arrogant and illegal nature of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia" during a ceremony allocating \$3 million in American aid for Thai areas suffering from the spillover from the fighting in Cambodia.

Shultz to Visit Refugee Camps

On Tuesday, Mr. Shultz is to visit Cambodian refugee camps and Thai military sites near the border.

An American official said the three rebel leaders had given Mr. Shultz a "generally upbeat" assessment of the military situation. The official said Mr. Shultz had limited his own remarks to expressing the support of the United States for rebel efforts.

The insurgent leaders who met with Mr. Shultz were: Gen. Sak Sutsakhan, a vice president of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front; Prince Norodom Ranariddh, who represents the forces loyal to his father, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and Abdul Gaafar, an aide to General Sak.

General Sak, a former Cambodian Defense Minister, is second to former Prime Minister Son Sann in the hierarchy of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, but he is the key mili-

tary figure in the non-Communist segment of the rebel coalition.

According to an American official, Mr. Shultz was told by the three visitors that their forces were growing more rapidly than those of the Khmer Rouge, the Communist member of the rebel coalition. The Khmer Rouge of Pol Pot, which ruled Cambodia from 1975 until ousted in 1979 by the Vietnamese-backed Cambodian Communists of Heng Samrin, have since then been accused of a reign of genocide.

Rebels' Strength Assessed

The American official, in assessing the strength of the two non-Communist rebel groups, said:

"What is going on is a much greater effort in the interior by both these groups," the official said. "The level of effort is considerably higher than seen in the past. Still, the Khmer Rouge is larger, but it is also true that the two non-Communist groups are the ones that have been growing most rapidly.

"Their troops have a good morale. After the Vietnamese dry-season offensive, they are making a major effort to get people into the interior. They cited fairly large figures and they said the defections of Vietnamese and from members of the Cambodian forces of Heng Samrin are up from last year."

The visitors declined to talk with reporters after the meeting, except to deny a report that they had been receiving millions of dollars in nonmilitary from the Central Intelligence Agency.

The American official who was briefing reporters said that the insurgents had neither asked for, nor received, any assurances of United States military aid.

The insurgency is understood to receive most of its weapons from China. The United States provides humanitarian and technical aid at the level of \$16 million a year.

While the House Foreign Affairs Committee recently passed an amendment that would authorize \$5 million a

year in military help, Mr. Shultz has said that he opposes the measure on the ground that rebels' military needs are being met by Asian nations.

Mr. Shultz said he preferred the Senate version of the Cambodian aid proposal, which would allow the United States to decide how to spend the money.

The combat strength of the non-Communist rebels is estimated at 20,000 to 30,000, but many of them are thought to be in Thailand as a result of the recent Vietnamese offensive. The American official said he understood from the Cambodian visitors that the number now fighting in Cambodia was "in the thousands."

"They made the point that they had no pretense of being able to evict the Vietnamese militarily," he said. "But they believe that by creating military pressure on Vietnam they can get Vietnam to the negotiating table."

He said the visitors had expressed support for moves by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, meeting this week in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to open discussions on Cambodia through so-called proximity talks. The latest proposal refers to talks with Vietnam rather than directly with the Cambodian Government, with Cambodians being part of the Vietnamese delegation.

Asian Appeal to Vietnam

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, July 8 (Reuters) — Non-Communist Southeast Asian nations called on Vietnam today to hold indirect talks with Cambodian rebels.

The call for so-called proximity talks was made in a joint statement issued during the annual meeting of foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The group — Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and Brunei — said it would seek endorsement for its strategy from the United States and its Western allies.